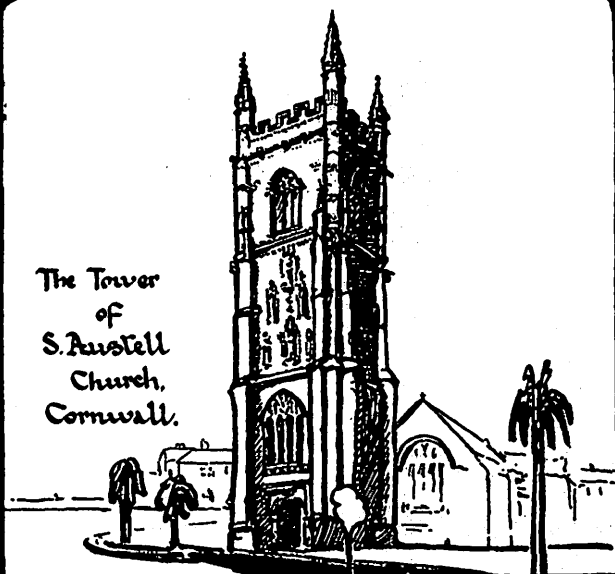
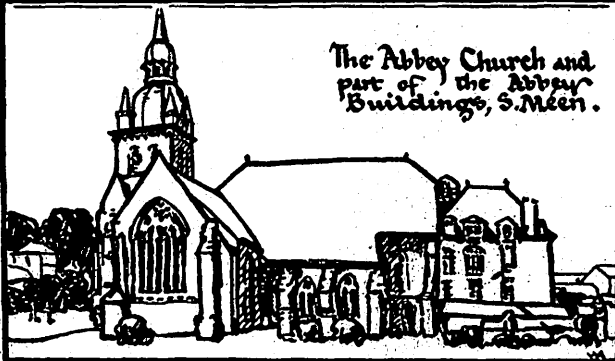


The Tower
of
S. Austell
Church,
Cornwall.



S. MEWAN & S. AUSTOL

The Abbey Church and
part of the Abbey
Buildings, S. Meen.



SAINT MEWAN AND SAINT AUSTOL

*Patrons of the Parishes of St. Mewan and
St. Austell, Cornwall*

BY THE

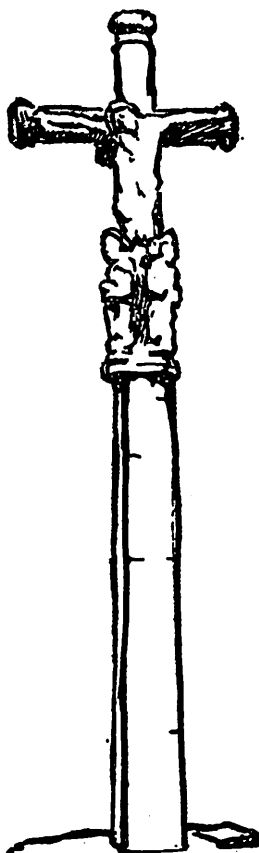
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*Vicar of Wendron, Honorary Canon of Truro
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Author of

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S. HERMES, S. CARANTOC, S. GWINEAR, S. MELAINE, S. FEOCK,
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FOUR SAINTS OF THE FAL, S. NEOT, S. SELEVAN, S. TUDY,
S. CLEATHER, S. CUBY, JOHN WESLEY IN CORNWALL AND A
JOHN WESLEY OF ARMORICAN CORNWALL, SS. NECTAN & KEYNE
AND THE CHILDREN OF BRYCHAN IN CORNWALL, S. CONSTANTINE
& S. MERRYIN, S. SYMPHORIAN, TWO CORNISH PARISHES IN THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, S. DECUMAN, BREAGE IN THE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY, S. PERRAN, S. KEVERNE & S. KERRIAN, S. AUGUSTINE
OF CANTERBURY IN ANJOU, LES SAINTS DU CORNWALL, LES
SAINTS BRETONS, S. GUDWAL, S. DAY, CORNISH CHURCH
CALENDAR, SOME REMARKS ON THE EXETER MARTYROLOGY,
MIRACLES AT S. MICHAEL'S MT. IN 1262, S. MERIADOC, S. SAMSON
IN CORNWALL, S. YVO, S. SULIAN & S. TYSILIO, S. GENNYNS, S.
BUDOC, THE LANALET PONTIFICAL, S. CADOC, S. MAWES,
S. RUMON & S. RONAN. THE "VITA NECTANI," HISTORY OF THE
THEFT AND RESTORATION OF THE RELICS OF S. PETROC IN 1177,
HISTORIES OF GORAN, ST. EWE, LELANT, ST. IVES, CROWAN,
CARDYNHAM.

SECOND EDITION 1939



The old Cross of S. Méeen Abbey



A.M.D.G.

SAINT MEWAN and SAINT AUSTOL,

Patrons of the Parishes of St. Mewan and St. Austell, Cornwall.

"And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood." 2 Kings vi: 1—4.

In the late Canon Hammond's well-known account of the large and populous parish of St. Austell, entitled *A Cornish Parish*,¹ the second chapter is devoted to the question of "The Name." The name "St. Austell" has puzzled many—visitors and natives, and it seems to have puzzled Canon Hammond. The chapter in which he deals with the question is the least satisfactory in the book, the flippancy in which he speaks of the ancient Cornish saints being as unworthy of serious history as the wild guesses in which he indulges (Canon Hammond actually attempts to father the vulgarism "orspital" on the mediæval inhabitants of this Cornish parish!) And the writer's failure is all the less excusable, as he had the true answer in his hands,—on p. 5, note 1, he mentions a letter in which Sir Paul Molesworth had pointed out that "Austol and Mewan were monks of the same monastery," quoting Dom Lobineau's *Lives of the Breton saints*. The oldest form of the name Austell is *Austol*, which occurs as early as 1150, and again in a deed of 1169—a charter in which Robert Fitzwilliam frees the "Sanctuarium de Sancto Austolo" from all imposts and obligations (the right form of the name lingered on as an alternative with *Austell* for some considerable time; and as the two adjacent parishes of St. Austell and St. Mewan bear the names of two Breton saints who were

¹ Skeffington & Son, London, 1897.



companions, one of whom was a very well-known personage indeed, there ought to be no doubt remaining in the mind of anyone who considers the nearness of Brittany and the large number of Breton saints who have given their names to Cornish parishes. The tradition about the two saints was still living in the remembrance of the people of St. Austell in the 16th century. Leland in 1538 was told that "Austolus was a hermit,"² and a note by Nicholas Roscarrock, an Elizabethan writer, shows that traces of the story of S. Mewan and S. Austol lingered on at St. Austell as late as 1580. "They hould by tradition that St. Austell and St. Muen were great friends whose parishes joyne and enjoye some priviledges together and that they lived here together. The feast of St. Muan is Nov. 19th." The truth is that Canon Hammond has made a mystery out of what was really no mystery at all. The revival of Celtic studies is fortunately making this sort of thing less common now.

At the present day St. Mewan is but a country suburb of the important town of St. Austell, but in hagiography the position is reversed—S. Austol is only known as the companion of the far more celebrated S. Mewan. In the first part of this little book I shall therefore deal mainly with S. Mewan, duly recording the place S. Austol has in the story of his life. After examining the legend of S. Mewan as it has been handed down to us in Brittany, I will deal with the evidence which may be deduced from the study of place-names in Brittany and Cornwall, and describe the cult of the saint on both sides of the Channel. Finally, I will briefly describe the ecclesiastical antiquities of the Cornish parishes of St. Austell and St. Mewan, using the materials collected by the late Mr. Charles Henderson.

I.

Saint Mevennus (his name has become *Méen* in the French-speaking parts of Brittany) is one of the chief of the Breton saints. A monastery, which became one of the most important in that country, was founded by him and bore his name, and the town which grew up around it is still called "Saint-Méen." A monk, it would seem, who lived there some centuries after his death,³ wrote

² *Collect.*, Vol. VII., p. 111, (marginal note) "Austolus erat eremita."

³ Early in the 11th century a clerk named Ingomar wrote a Life of S. Judicaël. Duine (*Memento des sources hagiographiques de l'histoire de Bretagne*, No. 83) thinks that he was also the author of the *Vita Mevenni*. In c. 11 of the latter work, the reader will observe, the writer promises to say more about S. Judicaël—a promise which seems to be fulfilled in the *Vita Judicaelis* 4]

a *Vita Mevenni*, which has been preserved for us in a valuable manuscript, formerly in the Abbey of St.-Méén and now in the National Library of Paris.⁴ This *Life* was printed by Dom Plaine in the Bollandist periodical *Analecta Bollandiana* (Vol. IV.) in 1884. As all subsequent accounts of S. Mevennus (such as those contained in the lessons for the saint in the 1519 Breviary of Dol and the 1537 Breviary of St.-Malo, and in the *Vies des Saints de la Bretagne Armorique* by Albert Le Grand and the similar collection by Dom Lobineau) are derived from this *Vita*, I will give an analysis of it.

VITA SANCTI MEVENNI.

Cum adhuc mundus pravae gentilitatis, etc.

c. 1. When all the world was wrapped in the darkness of the errors of the Gentiles, the Son of God became incarnate and died for our redemption. His Church grew and filled the earth, in spite of the efforts of the evil one to destroy it by raising persecutions, in which many martyrs died. At last peace dawned for the Church, and men glorious with the light of faith, following the footsteps of Christ, went forth into all the world.

c. 2. Among these there shone conspicuous Conaidus Mevennus. He was born, of noble family, in the regions beyond the seas. The *Orcheus pagus* in the province of Gwent (*Guenta*) was his birthplace. His father was called Gerascenus. The mother of S. Samson was a native of the same province. As a child he was intelligent, and serious-minded beyond his years. He was well educated, made extraordinarily rapid progress in his studies, spent much time in prayer, and became a model of every virtue. He laid aside his books only to give hospitality to poor pilgrims, and used to bring the needy and homeless into his own house. He renounced the world and chose to endure voluntary poverty in this life, rather than to lose the reward of the saints in heaven.

contained in the same manuscript. Ingomar's Life of S. Judicaël is dedicated to Abbot *Huguetinus* (Hinweten, Abbot of St.-Méén 1008—1024). About 1024 Alan, Duke of Brittany, restored the monastery, in honour of S. Mary, S. Mevennus and S. Judicaël. As the author of the *Vita Mevenni* makes no mention of the relics of the saint, which were not brought back to St. Méén till 1074, the beginning of the 11th century seems a likely date for its composition. M. Fawtier however (*Ingomar, Historien Breton*, Paris, 1925) questions the attribution of the *Vita Mevenni* to Ingomar.

⁴ No. 9889. This MS. also contains, besides the Lives of S. Mevennus, S. Judicaël and S. Judocus, a *Vita Petroci*, of which I have given a translation in my "S. Petroc" (No. 11 in this series).

c. 3. The blessed Samson (*Sanson*) was then the captain and teacher of all the faithful of that region. All looked to him as their spiritual guide. The aforesaid servant of God was a relative of Samson, and akin in spirit as well as in blood. As his revered master had decided to leave his home and his worldly possessions, and to go to Letavia, that is, Lesser Britain, he resolved to accompany him in his voluntary exile.

c. 4. The two servants of God, namely Saint Samson and Conaidus Mevennus, with their monks, safely cross the seas and arrive in Letavia. Crowds of both sexes flock to hear their preaching, among them one named Privatus, whose sick wife and daughter are healed by the prayers of the holy men.

c. 5. They find an island near the sea, surrounded by marshes, where there are springs of fresh water and good store of fish, called Dol (the writer derives the word from the latin *dolus* = deceit!), on the highest point of which they erect a monastery, where guests and pilgrims are received and alms distributed.

c. 6. To obtain assistance in building his basilica, Samson determined to send the blessed Conaid, as the most persuasive orator he possessed, on an embassy to Count Gueroc. Conaid started out, and one evening, when he had reached the *Pagus Placatus*, which was called *Transylva* [=Beyond the forest], and was looking for a lodging, he met with a certain charitably-disposed man named Cadvonus, who, mindful of the words of Christ and his disciples,⁵ used to go out daily and walk along the banks of the *Meu* (*Modonem fluvium*), looking for strangers, to whom he might offer hospitality and so receive the Lord as a guest. He rejoiced when he found Conaid and pressed him to come home with him, saying that he had a large house and ample accommodation. The blessed Mevennus gave thanks to God and accepted his offer, and he spent the night there observing strictly his monastic rule.⁶

c. 7. He was most hospitably entertained by his kind host, and the same night, after they had said divine service and conversed together on heavenly things, Cadvon invited Conaid, for whom he had conceived a warm affection, to reside with him, saying he had a vast estate, entirely uninhabited, and suitable for the site of a monastery, and as he had no heirs he would bequeath it to him, so

⁵ The writer quotes Matt. 25 : 10, Gal. 6 : 10, and the Rule of S. Benedict, "omnes supervenientes hospites tanquam Christus suscipiendi sunt."

⁶ *monachorum more.*

that he himself might, by his prayers, obtain an inheritance in heaven. Conaid accepted the offer, out of love for the blessed man, and, giving thanks to God, continued his journey. The aforesaid Count [*i.e.* Gueroch] received Saint Mevennus with honour, and gave him most generous gifts, commending himself to his prayers. Conaid visited the estate (*fundus*) of Cadvon on his way back, and the latter invited him to survey the lands he had offered him, saying, "Take possession of the country on both banks of the Meu, and hold it as a perpetual gift, and in proof of the same the land shall bear the name of *Transfosa*." The two servants of God made a league together, and the blessed Cadvon commended himself to the other's prayers. Conaid Meven then returned to Dol and told Samson everything that had happened. Samson gave thanks to God, and sent his blessing to the Count and Cadvon for their gifts.

c. 8. Not long after, Conaid Meven, desiring to live a more solitary life, by the advice of Saint Samson asked and obtained permission from all the brethren to depart to the aforesaid estate (*praedium*). Samson, who was not only his kinsman but loved him with a special affection, besought him with much earnestness to visit him frequently, and then, recognising the very great gifts of God in him and seeing him shining with heavenly light and resolved to serve the Lord faithfully, he sent him away with his blessing, saying, "Ye are my flesh and blood. Cleave unto the Lord, and above all cherish peace among yourselves and humility."

c. 9. So Conaid departed in peace and returned to Cadvon, who was glad and gave him all things necessary for building cells and for setting up a monastery. The country was a desert and abounded in wild beasts. One day, when seeking in the forest for a suitable place for a basilica, he found one ideal in every respect except that there was no water. Trusting in the Lord, he prayed, and then struck his staff into the ground, and a fountain of living water gushed out. This water not only healed sick men who came thither with faith, but even cured domestic animals which were diseased. In consequence the natives called it "The White" (*Album*), because there the sick recovered the whiteness of health. Hearing of this miracle, the people of the neighbourhood flocked to him from all sides, bringing their friends who were oppressed with divers infirmities, who returned restored to health both of body and soul.

c. 10. Having now, as we said, obtained a suitable site, the saint proceeded to erect cells and huts for his monastery. He then built an oratory in a more open piece of ground, which he carefully selected, and dedicated the same to the Lord in honour of S. John the Baptist. Here he lived for a a long time, passing his days in prayer and vigil, offering himself as a living sacrifice unto the Lord.

As his fame spread, noble men and women of the province offered him their sons, the number of monks greatly increased, and he built a larger monastery, which flourished exceedingly and received many gifts; so that it was able to minister to the needs, both spiritual and temporal, of great numbers of persons, and give much alms. The monks were never idle, and practised rigid self-denial.

c. 11. In this way the monastery became so famous that even Judicael himself, the Duke of the Britons, as will be later described, commended himself to the prayers of the monks there, enriched the house with many gifts, and bestowed many ornaments [for the church]. By the advice of Saint Meven he also built many other monasteries in the province, and repaired some that had been deserted. He fed the poor, he executed righteous judgement among his people, and loved to be present at the worship of God in church. Finally he himself became a monk in Conaid's monastery.

c. 12. The most pious Duke Judicaël had a brother very unlike him in character, living near the saint's monastery. One day he threw a certain servant of his into prison on some trifling accusation and sentenced him to death. The blessed Conaid passing by heard his cries in the dungeon, while on his way to the cell of one of the brethren, and, moved with pity, went to Count Haelon and besought him to release him. Haelon proudly refused, but in answer to Conaid's prayers the servant was miraculously set free and fled to the monastery for refuge. [c. 13]. Haelon, hearing of this, sent his servants to bring him back by force. The servant of God placed the fugitive in the oratory, saying, "It is unlawful to remove any person who has taken sanctuary from the church, even if he have committed a capital offence. Let his case then be duly tried in a court of law." The servants returned to their master, who came in a fury, reviled the saint, and, breaking into the monastery, seized his captive. The saint betook himself to prayer, and then announced to Haelon that, as a punishment for what he had done, he would die in three days. And, as Haelon was returning home, boasting proudly of what he had done, he was thrown from his horse and seriously injured. Thus brought to repentance, he sent for the saint, confessed to him his sins and obtained absolution, received the viaticum of the Lord's Body, and died at the end of three days, as the saint had foretold. The writer adds a warning to similar "tyrants, who violate churches."

c. 14. The fields cultivated by the monks were devastated by the incursions of stags, wild boars, and other denizens of the adjacent forest. The lay brothers complained to the blessed Conaid, who went out early in the morning, and, after praying and
8]

making the sign of the cross, commanded the hosts of wild animals he found in the harvest fields to depart and leave the abbey lands unmolested. The beasts obeyed him, and never repeated their ravages.

c. 15 consists of pious reflections on the above miracle.

c. 16. After some years the servant of God made a pilgrimage to Rome. On his way back he passed through the city of Angers. Crowds flocked, both from town and country, to see this venerated father, and besought him that he would abide with them longer to teach them the way of truth. During his stay there a certain nun who inhabited the aforesaid city came, and, falling at at his feet, implored him to deliver her lands (*praedium*) from a monstrous serpent, who infested them and destroyed both man and beast with his fiery breath. The servant of God enquired where the *praedium* was. The nun replied, "Between Saint-Florent and Clermont, within the diocese of Nantes." Next morning he made his way to the place named, and guides, standing at a safe distance, indicated to him the serpent's abode. Trusting in the Lord, he boldly approached the serpent, and, fastening his stole (*monopalium*) round his neck, and hooking the curved end of his staff into it (*baculi curvitate adnexa*), led it after him like a dog, to the river Loire, into which he precipitated it, saying, "Hurt no creature from henceforth."

c. 17. The people of the neighbourhood came to meet him on his return, giving thanks to God. They offered him gifts, which he bestowed on the poor. The nun whose land he had freed from the serpent asked him to accept it as a gift at her hand and to build a church there. To overcome his reluctance, she said that he must take the land in exchange for his stole, which the serpent had carried off tied round his neck. Thus persuaded, the saint accepted the land, and built there a church and monastery (*aediculas*), which was afterwards called "The Monopalium," owing to the story of the stole being handed down by local tradition there.

c. 18. The blessed servant of God worked many miracles in this place, restoring troops of sick persons to health. He spent the rest of his life, partly in this monastery, but more often in his first foundation, watching over both sheepfolds with unfailing care, and guarding them against the old wolf, praying unceasingly for his sheep.

c. 19. "And since we have described, to the best of our power, his life and miracles, let us now go on to relate how he passed happily away from this world. Long before the hour of his death

he knew when it would be, and, as the appointed time approached, he took care to fortify himself with the heavenly ordained rites. And when, now an old man and full of days, he perceived the first signs of infirmity approach, calling the brethren together, he openly declared to them that the time of the dissolution of his body had arrived, and in words of love instructed them what they were to do, and how they were to fight against the devices of *that old serpent*.⁷ When he had finished admonishing those committed to his charge with these and similar exhortations, he began to feel his bodily strength fail him. Seeing this, a certain presbyter named Austolus, his godson, who was wont to serve him humbly in the monastery, was pierced with grief, and said, 'Why, Father, dost thou leave me thy servant desolate?'⁸ Who shall guard thy feeble sheep from the wolf, when the shepherd is taken away? It had been better that I, whom thou hast taught the truth, had been buried by thy hands and commended by thy devoted prayers to God before thy departure.' He wept exceedingly, and his beloved godfather replied, 'Dearest godson, go on with thy appointed labours and diligently perform the duties laid upon thee, for, by God's mercy, after seven days have elapsed, thou shalt join me in the glory of the heavenly life. The bond of charity which unites us is not broken, nay, it shall be made stronger.' After saying these words in the hearing of all who were present, the divinely appointed hour having arrived, the blessed saint departed happily to heaven on the 21st June. At his departure the angels rejoice and the saints exult in God, but the mourning band of monks and all the people are filled with grief. The heavenly hosts accompany his soul with gladness to the kingdom, while his earthly friends carry his body weeping to the tomb.

But the aforesaid Austolus, obeying the most holy father's command, continued faithfully to minister to his brethren, as he had been charged. For he gladly served God and his fellow men, and ardently longed for the kingdom of heaven, fearing not the gate of death by which he was to enter that kingdom. So when seven days had passed, as his godfather had foretold, he received the reward which God has promised to his faithful ones. On the seventh day, which is the 28th June, having observed a three days' fast, he went alone to the church as he was wont, and there he peacefully fell asleep, none knowing what had happened. Later on the brethren came and found him dead, though his body was still

⁷ Rev. 12 : 9.

⁸ Imitated from Sulpicius Severus's description of the death of S. Martin (*Epist.* 3).
10]

warm; and, remembering the love which these two servants of God had for each other, they went immediately to visit the tomb of S. Mevennus. They opened it and discovered that the Saint's body, which diffused a fragrant odour instead of the odour of corruption, had moved and was lying on the right of the grave facing the vacant space on the left, as if waiting for his disciple. They believed that this had happened by God's appointment, and they buried the blessed godson by his blessed godfather. And thus the dead bones of the two saints declared the love which had ever united them, and the power of that *charity which covereth a multitude of sins*,⁹ and that, as they had *fought the good fight*¹⁰ together, so the same heavenly recompense awaited them, through that Shepherd, Who is *the chief Shepherd*,¹¹ Jesus Christ, Who liveth for ever and ever. Amen."

This *Life* of S. Mewan was, as we have seen, probably written about 500 years after the death of the saint. If the reader will ask himself what kind of "composition" an intelligent schoolboy of to-day, set to write the history of someone who lived in the time of Henry V., without being allowed to consult any books, would be able to produce, he will see how useless it is to expect the *Vita Mevenni* to contain an accurate biography of the 6th century Abbot.

The writer has heard of well known figures in the early history of Brittany whom he introduces into the story, without being aware that they did not live all at the same time.¹² Mewan is sent by S. Samson to obtain funds for the building of the church at Dol (c. 522) from Gueroc. Weroc (*Gueroc* is a 10th century form of the name), who appears in Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks* as the leader of the immigrants in the South of Brittany, from whom the Vannetais took the name, which it long retained, of *Bro-Weroc* (=The Country of Weroc), only succeeded his father Macliaw in 576.¹³ Judicaël is another perfectly historical character,

⁹ 1 Peter, 4: 8.

¹⁰ 2 Timothy, 4: 8.

¹¹ 1 Peter, 5: 4.

¹² In the same way one biographer of S. Neot describes him as an elderly relative of Alfred, but quite young in the time of Alfred's grandson, Athelstan.

¹³ Mgr. Duchesne says "Weroc, prince of the Vannetais, is mentioned in several legends, notably in those of St. Gurthiern of Quimperlé, of St. Gildas of Rhuys, and of St. Méen of Gaël; there may be some truth in the relations between him and these saints described in their legends."

but he cannot have entered S. Mewan's monastery before 637, the accepted date of his visit to the Court of King Dagobert. Dom Plaine suggests that Mewan was 118 years old when he died, but he must have been considerably older to have been a contemporary of all the personages with whom his biographer associates him.

The *Life of S. Mewan* is clearly, in the main, a collection of local legends, all (except one) connected with the writer's home, *viz.* the Abbey of St.-Méen. The majority of these anecdotes are typical hagiographical legends, many of them related of several other saints. The story of the stags forbidden to trample on the monks' cornfields closely resembles one told of S. Sulian, the eponym of St.-Suliac-sur-Rance, and recalls other similar stories in the *Lives* of S. Iltyd and S. Paul Aurelian. S. Aubyn delivers prisoners at Angers exactly in the same way as Mewan delivers Haelon's captive.¹⁴ The pilgrimage to Rome is a feature of many *Lives* of Celtic saints, and our author does not think it worth while to enlarge on it. The stories of the well and of the serpent are of course the most familiar themes in the whole of hagiography,¹⁵ and we observe the evident delight with which the writer of the *Vita Mevenni* describes the saint inserting the crook of his staff in the stole with which he bridles the serpent. He must have noticed the smile on the faces of his hearers as he added this and other lifelike details from his fertile imagination.

It often happens that a Celtic hagiographer inserts, among a string of commonplace anecdotes, one of real originality.¹⁶ The story with which our author so happily finishes his work is a case in point. The connection between S. Mewan and S. Austol is undoubtedly based on a genuine ancient tradition, as we shall see, but the writer has elaborated a story he had heard about them into a most charming legend. Dom Lobineau pointed out, in his matter-of-fact way, that the sarcophagus shown to pilgrims at St.-Méen when he wrote (beginning of the 18th century) only contained room for one corpse. The story is, of course, a legend, but a beautiful one, and almost unique in hagiography.

¹⁴ It does not follow that these two stories in the V.M. are actually copied from similar stories in other *Lives*. Wild animals must often have trampled down growing crops, and many saintly monks and hermits must have interceded for prisoners.

¹⁵ In No. 36 of this series I have suggested an explanation of the origin of these serpent stories.

¹⁶ As, *e.g.*, the beautiful story in the *Vita Winwaloei* of how no one could die in the first monastery at Landévennec, or that of SS. Guimarch & Tysilio viewing Rome from Meifod.

But although the *Vita Mevenni* is not, as it stands, a trustworthy biography of S. Mewan, we should be making a great mistake if we dismissed it as historically worthless.¹⁷ It contains some traditions which are certainly true and of great importance for the historian.

Like the *Life of S. Brioc*¹⁸ it begins with a statement about the country from which the saint came which is confirmed by independent evidence. His birthplace, we are told, was the *Orcheus pagus* in Gwent. Every student of the *Book of Llandaff* knows what an important place the kingdom of Erging (now the Hundred and Deanery of Archenfield in the west of Herefordshire), the country of S. Dubricius, played in the early ecclesiastical history of Wales.¹⁹ A Breton monk of the 11th century could not have invented this statement. He must have learnt it from an ancient tradition in the Abbey, written or oral. In another part of Gwent, in the parish of Machen in Monmouthshire, is a place called *Lanawstl*, which must mean "The Monastery of Austol." Our writer is quite correct in saying that S. Samson's mother was a native of Gwent, and so was another saint associated with S. Samson—S. Petroc.²⁰ We have no other authority for the name *Gerascenus*, which may be a corrupt form (as are *Orcheus* and *Placatus* in this *Vita*), but there is a *Merthir Gerein* near Tintern and a *Llangarran*²¹ (now supposed to be a stream-name) in Archenfield.

The author of the *Vita Mevenni* borrows (in c. 4) several statements from the *Vita Samsonis*, but he did not find there the story of Mewan being the kinsman of Samson, to which he refers three times. I think we may be satisfied that it was a genuine tradition, since it agrees, as we shall see, with information supplied by the study of Cornish and Breton topography.

¹⁷ As does M. Molinier (*Sources de l'Histoire de France*).

¹⁸ see No. 17 in this series.

¹⁹ *Ergin*, *Erchin*, *Ercic*, etc. is mentioned about 40 times in the *Liber Landavensis*.

²⁰ The *Vita Petroci* in the Gotha MS. says that "S. Winleu was the brother of S. Petroc, and his church is at Newport" in Monmouthshire. Gwent is mentioned in the *Vita Samsonis*, c. 1, and in the *Vita Sancti Machutis* (=Malo), c. 1.

²¹ Among the "Churches of Erging" the *Liber Landavensis* mentions Llangarran; and says "Tempore Willelmi Regis consecravit Lan-garran Joseph episcopus Landavie Hergualdus ordinavit Tecguaret filium Guier." *Awstl* may be derived from the Roman name *Augustulus*.

The writer leaves the region of vague generalities and plagiarism from older *Lives* when he has brought his hero to the Forest of Broceliande, where the local traditions of St.-Méen become available. He only briefly refers to Gueroc, but has much to say about *Cadvon*. This personage is otherwise unknown to history, but there is no reason to doubt, what was clearly the unquestioned tradition of the Abbey, that its benefactor was a chieftain bearing this typical Celtic name.²² He may have been a leader, or descended from one of the leaders, of the great immigration of British refugees into Armorica. We are told that he lived in the *Pagus Placatus* (probably the scribe's blunder for *Poutrocoet*, as the writer tells us it means "Beyond the Wood," which is exactly what *Poutrocoet* means²³). The land he gives to Conaid, we learn, was afterwards known as *Transfosa*. This name is now lost, as is that of the fountain made to spring up by S. Mewan, which we are told was called *Album*.²⁴ The *Vita Mevenni*, like so many too lightly esteemed *Lives* of saints, is of great value for the early topographical information it has preserved.

The reader must bear in mind that all the chapters relating to the early history of the monastery of St.-Méen are written from the point of view of a monk who lived there centuries later. Cadvon's speech in bestowing *Transfosa* may very likely be ascribed to him in order to justify a claim of the monastery, perhaps disputed by some feudal lord, to land on *both* banks of the Meu. The story of the original dedication of the monastery church to S. John the Baptist may of course be true (if so, it would be a very interesting instance of the practice of dedicating churches in honour of saints existing in the Celtic church at this period), but it is quite possible that it was suggested to the writer by the fact that the parish church of St.-Méen-le-Grand, destroyed in 1807, was dedicated to the Baptist.²⁵ No doubt other statements and speeches are also coloured, in the same way, by later local circumstances.

²² *cad*="battle," and appears in such names as Cadoc, Cad-farch, Cat-guen, Cat-gual, etc.

²³ The Cartulary of St.-Melaine in Rennes mentions a chapel of *Trécoet* in the parish of Plélan. The *Pagus Trecoit* is referred to in the first Life of S. Turian, and the *Pagus Trans Silvam* in the Life of S. Malo by Bili.

²⁴ It is not easy to give a satisfactory explanation of the origin of this name. "*Album*" would of course be *Wen* in Cornish and Breton. Saint Wenn has a considerable cult in Cornwall, and *wen* forms part of many Cornish personal names. As we shall see (p. 43) there is a place-name in St. Austell parish containing *wen*,—Alterwen, which may mean "The Altar of S. Wenn."

²⁵ see Banéat, *Le Département d'Ille-et-Vilaine*, t. IV. p. 39, and Guillotin de Courson, *Pouillé de Rennes*, II. 143, IV. 637 f., VI. 175 f.

We have spoken about S. Judicaël. No doubt he was one of the chief glories of the Abbey, though he cannot have lived there in the time of S. Mewan. The *Vita Judicaelis*, however, asserts that he did, and relates several anecdotes in which the two saints appear together.²⁶ In any case it is certain that Judicaël, Prince of Domnonia, felt a strong attraction for the monastic life. On a visit to the King of the Franks, Dagobert, he met Dadon (St. Ouen, afterwards Bishop of Rouen) and Eligius (St. Eloi or Loy), who are known to have been ardent admirers of the Irish monastic rule as introduced into Gaul by St. Columbanus, and were evidently "in sympathy with the ascetic spirit of Judicaël."²⁷ It is certain that he entered the monastery of Gaël. He was regarded as a saint (his Festival was kept on 17 Dec.). A charter of Louis the Pious in 816 speaks of the abbey of Gaël as "the house of the church of St. Mewan and St. Judicaël which is in the place called Wadel."

The story of the foundation of the monastery of St.-Méen-sur-Loire (in the parish of Le Cellier and canton of Ligné, near Ancenis) is the most elaborately worked-up incident in the whole *Life*, but it is no doubt woven round a fact, which it has fortunately preserved. The Priory near Nantes was of little importance in the Middle Ages, and its association with S. Mewan might otherwise have been forgotten.²⁸

²⁶ Dom Plaine (*op. cit.*) gives some extracts from the *Vita Judicaelis*. Its author says the saint entered the monastery *Mevenno adhuc superstite*. The latter, on his way through the garden to an oratory at night, witnesses the severe ascetic practices adopted by the royal monk, and later proves his humility by inflicting a penance for an imaginary fault.

²⁷ Duine, *Memento*, No. 76.

²⁸ M. Bourde de la Rogerie, late Archivist of the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, tells me that, though the Priory at Le Cellier is called the Priory of the Abbey of St.-Méen, he cannot remember any evidence in the Departmental Archives proving any direct connection between the Abbey and St.-Méen-sur-Loire, and that certainly none existed since the 16th century. The Archives cannot at present be consulted owing to War conditions. The Soc. Arch. de Nantes has printed, in tome XXXII of its journal, some papers relating to this subject read at meetings of the Society in 1893-4. M. Léon Maitre thought there was no proof that S. Mewan founded the Priory, and suggested that the chapel bore his name only because it stood by the side of a road used by pilgrims going to St.-Méen-le-Grand. But this denies a tradition that was evidently ancient in the 11th cent. It is a pity, as M. de la Rogerie remarks, that no one has yet examined the documents about St.-Méen-sur-Loire which are probably in the Archives of the Dept. of Loire-Inferieure.

The *Life* ends with the story of the deaths of S. Mewan and S. Austol. It is not only, in its present form, (as I have said), a most picturesque and original legend, but it affords one of the most valuable clues to the early history of Cornwall and Brittany which we possess. In Brittany S. Austol is honoured only in the Abbey of St.-Méén, where he had a considerable cult, of which we have further evidence (see pp. 22, 23). The author of the *Vita Mevenni* could not have heard his name except from the traditions about him, as Mewan's companion,²⁹ handed down in the Abbey. But in Cornwall we find this saint patron of an important church, with the parish church of an adjacent parish dedicated to S. Mewan. We find S. Austol (as I have already mentioned) honoured in a parish in Gwent, the province from which the *Vita Mevenni* says S. Mewan came. The latter is said to have been a relative of S. Samson, and the parishes of St. Austell and St. Mewan are quite close to the churches in Cornwall dedicated to S. Samson at Golant and Southill. In my book on "S. Samson in Cornwall" I have shown that it is most likely that saint, and the numerous band of monks and friends who accompanied him on his journey from Glamorgan, stayed some time in Cornwall on their way to Brittany and founded churches there (the *Second Life of S. Samson* definitely says they did), including, in all probability, the churches of St. Austell, St. Mewan, Luxulyan and Linkinhorne, whose church, dedicated to S. Melor (described in the label on his relics in the Abbey of St.-Magloire at Paris as *Sanctus Melorius, consobrinus Sancti Samsonis*), is within a mile of the church of S. Sampson, Southill.³⁰ The patron saints of other mid-Cornwall parishes may

²⁹ A remarkable fact, of which no explanation has yet been offered, is the existence in Cornwall and Brittany of traces of the close association of one saint with another, the cult of two saints being constantly found side by side in different places. Thus churches dedicated to S. Gwinear and S. Meriadoc are found in adjacent parishes in Cornwall and in the same parish in Brittany, and the same is true of S. Ké and S. Fili, S. Brioc and S. Marcan, S. Cadoc and S. Mawgan, S. David and S. Nonna. The joint cult of SS. Mewan and Austol is a particularly striking example of this phenomenon

³⁰ See Nos. 36 and 37 in this series. M. Loth suggested that the fact of the parishes of St. Mewan and St. Austell not being mentioned in the *Vita Samsonis* showed that, when the hagiographer wrote, the churches in question did not yet bear the names they now bear (*La Vie la plus ancienne de Saint Samson de Dol*, Paris, 1914, p. 28), which would mean that later Breton influence led to these dedications. This seems to me most unlikely. S. Austol is *not* a well-known Breton saint. In Brittany he is unknown outside the walls of the monastery of St.-Méén. Only the influence of the Abbey of St. Méén (and there is no evidence that this abbey had any influence in Cornwall) could have led to the introduction of S. Austol's cult from Brittany.

prove to be also companions of S. Samson. After thus playing an important part in the creation of Cornwall as we know it to-day, they crossed to the Channel Islands, and from there to the N.E. of Armorica, where they founded a large number of churches in what became the diocese of Dol, with its numerous enclaves, and in parts of the later diocese of St-Malo. It is the clearest glimpse we possess into the lost history of the British colonization of Armorica in the 5th and 6th centuries, and the most promising in respect of clues it may supply for further discoveries in this fascinating but little-known subject, and a good instance of the importance of the study of hagiography for students of history.

II.

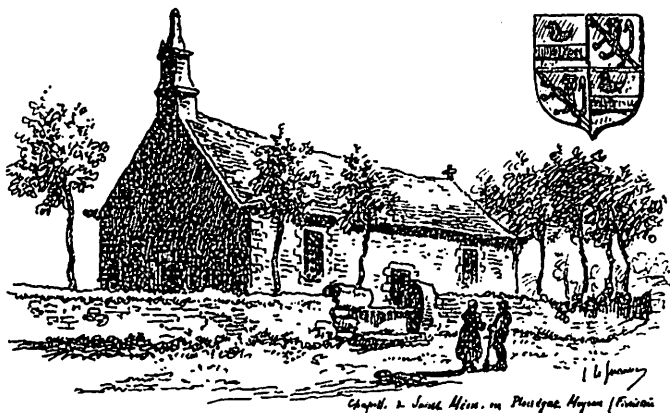
Such is the legend of S. Mewan handed down to us in Breton hagiography. Legend is not to be despised, because it often preserves some dim reminiscence of the forgotten truth. The *Lives* of the Celtic saints must be carefully studied, and sifted again and again to find the few grains of truth they contain, for they are almost our only written sources of information for this period. There is much to be learnt, as we have seen, from the 11th century *Life* of S. Mewan.

But, besides these more or less late written *Lives* of the saints of the ancient Celtic church, we have another source of information. "Place-names," says a great scholar (M. Largillière), "are documents of indisputable sincerity," and the study of the names of places in Celtic countries can tell us much about the doings of the ancient Celtic saints, for so many place-names in Wales and Cornwall and Brittany contain the names of saints. "In these three countries," M. Loth has said, "it is not the *Lives* of the saints that tell us most about the existence of the saints and the national organization of Religion, but the names of places." The fact that a parish or village or farm or well is called after a saint is sometimes a proof that he lived there, sometimes it is a proof that it afterwards belonged to his monastery and that monks from his monastery visited it, or that some of the saints's relics were at a later period given to the church there. In any case the fact of the existence of the cult of a saint in any particular place is always of importance to the student of local history and to the student of folk-lore. By patient study of the evidence before us discoveries of great importance may be made.

The study of philology and topography throws considerable light on the history of S. Mewan. In several points it confirms what the Legend handed down to us about him tells us. The Saint's name is an early Celtic one, it is derived (says the great Celtic



scholar, M. Loth)³¹ from the root *maw*=servant. As an element in place-names it is found in the oldest class of place-names in Brittany—these beginning with *plou*, *lan*, and *tre*. "Most certainly this saint belongs to the early period; he is the *éponyme* (patron saint giving his name to a place) of Ploéven in Finistère, of Tréméven (F. and C.-du-N.) and probably of several *Lannévens*. (=Lan-Meven.) There are innumerable places called Saint-Méen." (Places beginning "Saint—" almost invariably belong to a later period.) "Everyone knows that the cult of this saint had a great vogue in Brittany during the Middle Ages on account of the special healing power attributed to him." (Largillière, *Les Saints et l'organisation chrétienne primitive dans l'Armorique bretonne*, pp. 41, 42.) In the parish of Plouégat-Moysan near Lannion is a chapel dedicated to SS. Mewan and Judicaël, and a holy well, in which the aid of St. Mewan used to be sought for the cure of



skin-disease; in the diocese of St.-Malo there was in 1032 a church "Sancti Mewen Judichel." There is thus widespread and early evidence for the association of the monk with the king his protector."—(ib. 81.) (At the same time M. Largillière thinks it possible that the original patron of the two places called Lannéven and of the parish of Ploéven may have been, not our S. Mewan, but an ancient missionary of almost identical name. Ploéven was *Ploemeguen* in 1468, and the patron of Lannéven in the parish of Bégard is called in local legends *Min* or *Minic* and is described as

³¹ *Chrest. bret.* 1re part., 1890, p. 151. cf. *Revue Celtique* t. XI. (1890), p. 147.
18]

the uncle of St. Idunet, patron of the adjoining parish of Pluzunet. The celebrated S. Mewan may have supplanted him as patron in these three places, as he has supplanted many other saints in the diocese of Vannes.)

Foremost among the places bearing the name of our saint naturally comes the great Abbey he founded. It became for a time the favourite place of residence of the bishops of Aleth or St.-Malo. Separated from the coast by a forest, the district of Gaël (it was known as Poutrocoet=The Land beyond the Wood) was much less exposed to piratical raids than Aleth. Sometimes the Bishop of Aleth was even called "the Bishop in Poutrocoet."³² The district afterwards became the archdeaconry of Porhoët. The village of Saint-Méen-le-Grand, as it proudly calls itself, is situated two and a half miles to the north of Gaël.

There has been considerable controversy in recent years as to whether St.-Méen-le-Grand occupies the actual site of the monastery founded by S. Mewan, and, if not, as to where that site is.

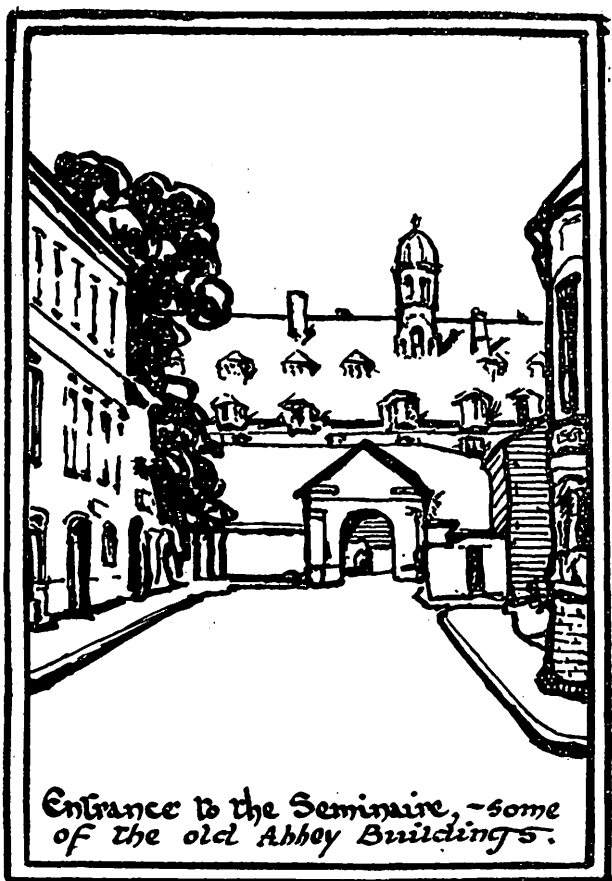
The *Vita Mevenni* (c. 9) seems to imply that the church and monastery were erected close to the well which the saint caused to spring up. The words "habitatores loci istius Album ei nomen dederunt" suggest however that when the author wrote the well was in a different place to the monastery, bearing its own name. "The *Fontaine Saint-Méen* is 2 kil. 100 m. east of the town, 600 m. west of the road, 100 m. east of the railway The *Chapelle Saint-Méen de la Fontaine* stands close to the well. It was demolished in 1811 but rebuilt in 1837."³³ For centuries this well was the object of pilgrimages from all over France, on account of the reputation it possessed of curing certain diseases. "The well," wrote Albert Le Grand in the 17th century, "is still seen, and is famous for the powers it possesses of curing a malady called by the doctors *Prosa*, and by the common people 'St. Méen's evil,'³⁴ which is a malignant mange, which eats away the flesh down to the bone." The well and chapel, says M. Banéat, "are still [1929] an object of pilgrimage, and the people of the communes of St.-Méen, Le Crouais and St.-Onen-la-Chapelle go there in procession to ask for rain in time of drought. The foot of the processional cross is dipped in the water of the well" (*op. cit.*, IV. 31).

Canon Guillotin de Corson thinks that the original monastery of the saint must have been here.

³² F. Lot, *Mélanges d'histoire bretonne*, Paris, 1907, pp. 28, 29.

³³ Banéat, *op. cit.*, IV. 41.

³⁴ In Breton "Rouign sant Men" (Breton Dict., 1732.)



*Entrance to the Seminaire, - some
of the old Abbey Buildings.*

Other scholars, among them La Borderie, relying on the words "cis fluvium Modonem et ultra eam posside," attributed by the author of the *Vita Mevenni* to Cadvon, consider that the monastery must have been at Gaël, which is on the Meu (4 kil. S. of St.-Méen, which is *not* on the river, while the Fountain of St.-Méen is 6 kil. distant from it). We have seen that a charter of 816 speaks of the "house and church of S. Mewan and S. Judicaël *which is in the place called Wadel.*"³⁵

Yet another suggestion has been advanced by the late abbé J. Le Claire (*Recherches sur l'Emplacement du Premier Monastère de Saint Méen*). He shows that a farm, now called "les Menais," on the River Meu, in the parish of Le Loscouët, is described in a document belonging to the Abbey of St.-Méen, dated 1513, as "a place called the Manor of Monsieur Saint Méen, belonging from time immemorial to the Abbot of Saint-Méen and his Priors, which, according to the tradition of the neighbourhood, is said to be 'the beginning and head of the Abbey.'"

In any case, the monastery was fixed in its present position by the 11th century, and it became one of the chief Abbeys in Brittany. The chancel, transepts and central tower of the abbey church still remain, and form a very fine example of a Gothic church of the 12th and 13th centuries. The nave was pulled down in the 18th century, and the high altar is now under the tower, at the west end of the church. In the north transept is the tomb of S. Mewan—a mediæval structure. Until 1771 this tomb stood in the nave of the Abbey Church, and was visited by the pilgrims, as Dom Lobineau tells us.³⁶ It is to be observed that the pilgrims who came to the Holy Well to be healed of *le mal St. Méen* were not content with using the waters of the well, but invariably went on to the Abbey to pray at the Saint's tomb. In the 17th cent. a reforming bishop of St.-Malo, who was also commendatory abbot of the abbey of St.-Méen, expelled the Benedictine monks and introduced the Lazarist priests of S. Vincent de Paul, turning the abbey into a seminary for training candidates for holy orders. M. Coste, in his three-volume *Life of S. Vincent de Paul*, gives a vivid picture of the difficulties the Lazarists had with the expelled Benedictines in 1646. A crowd of "numerous pilgrims waiting for the doors of the church to be opened" witnessed

³⁵ The parish church of Gaël is dedicated to S. Peter, but a *declaration* of 1679 states that the Prior and Convent of Saint-Méen were obliged to bring the relics of "Monsieur Saint Méen" in procession to S. Peter's church at Gaël every year on Whitsunday (Pouillé de Rennes, IV. 640).

³⁶ *Les Vies des Saints de Bretagne*, 1724, p. 142.

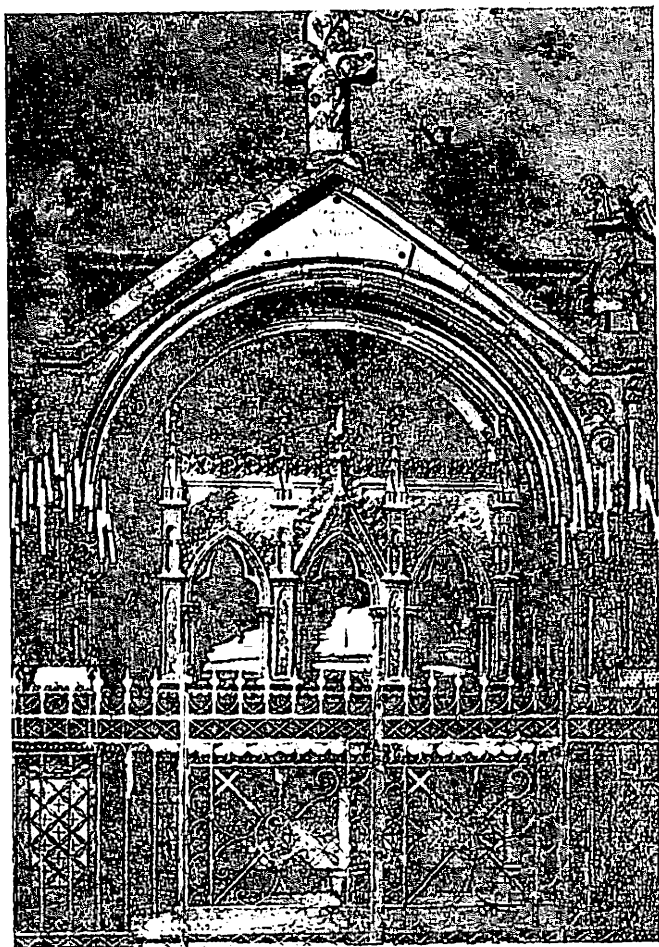
the extraordinary scenes at the Abbey on 23 July of that year. S. Vincent de Paul himself heard the confessions of the pilgrims at St.-Méen in Holy Week 1649.³⁷ The abbey buildings, rebuilt in 1712 by the Lazarists, still remain, and are a fine specimen of the dignified domestic architecture of the period. In 1906 the State confiscated them and the seminary has had to find shelter elsewhere. Since then, as no one wants the building, the sacrilegious possessors of the house have let it out in tenements to the lowest class of tenant. It was sad to see the dirty state of this magnificent building when I visited it in June 1926. The tenants had broken up all the panelling of the great corridor for firewood, and a notice had had to be put up forbidding the emptying of slops out of the windows, under pain of expulsion! Such are the results of the unjust and petty anti-clericalism which has too long governed France.

The abbey of St.-Méen was pillaged by the Normans, who temporarily occupied Brittany during part of the 10th cent.³⁸ The relics of S. Mewan, in common with the relics of all the other Breton saints, were carried into the interior of France in 919, to escape the Northmen. They were brought back from St.-Florent in 1074, on 18 January. We learn from a service book printed at St.-Malo for the use of the abbey of St.-Méen in 1769 ("Officia propria insignis ecclesiae abbatialis Mevennensis") that Jan. 18th was kept in the abbey as a great festival. The same authority tells us that the abbey contained the relics of S. Mewan and "of his disciple S. Austol," and that the festival of S. Judicaël, "King of Brittany and Confessor," was observed on 17 December. The kalendar in the *Obituary of St.-Méen* (Bibl. Nat., MS. Lat., 9889) tells us that at the Feast of the Translation of S. Mewan the reliquary containing his head was carried in procession. A Vigil was observed before his Feast of 21st June. At the Feast the *hystoria propria* of the saint was read. There were 12 lessons at Matins, 4 copes were worn, and 18 candles were lighted. The relics and the head of S. Mewan were carried in the procession. The Feast of S. Austol was kept on 27th June, and the Octave of S. Mewan next day. A proper sequence ("O te silvas habitantem"³⁹) was sung at Mass. Another interesting

³⁷ See *Monsieur Vincent*, Paris, 1932, vol. II. pp. 133—144, 681.

³⁸ For the Abbey of St.-Méen, its church, and the tomb of the saint, see Banéat, *op. cit.*, pp. 32—40. On the road from Le Loscouet to Gael is a stone called "St. Méen's Knee." The saint is said to have one day knelt on this stone to pray, as he heard the Angelus ring from the monastery of Trefossa, and it still bears the impress of his knee (Claire, *op. cit.*).

³⁹ At least this was the sequence for his festival in the Use of Vannes.
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THE TOMB OF SAINT MEWAN,
IN THE ABBEY CHURCH OF SAINT-MÉEN.

fact which we learn from this kalendar is that the Abbey kept with equal solemnity the feast of the Cornish saint Petrock on 4 June. Now the Life of S. Petroc describes him as a companion of S. Samson, the master of S. Mewan—oral traditions collected by the late abbé Duine in the diocese of Dol agree with the written legend. In the 12th century a canon of Bodmin named Martin stole the body of S. Petrock from Bodmin and carried it over to Brittany to the abbey of St.-Méen. Henry II. enforced its restoration.⁴⁰ In the long "History of the theft and restoration of the relics of S. Petroc," by Robert of Tauton, Canon of Bodmin, contained in the *Vita Petroci* in the newly-discovered Gotha MS., the arrival of Martin, with the relics, at the Abbey, and the unavailing struggles of the monks there to retain them when the Prior of Bodmin appeared with the King's order, are described in a most life-like and detailed manner. When the relics were brought back to Winchester, the king, to console the monks of St.-Méen for having lost them, sent them back one of the saint's ribs in a silver reliquary. In the 17th and 18th centuries St.-Méen claimed that the reliquary contained his head!

A large number of places in Brittany, especially in Higher Brittany (the eastern part of the country), bear the name of S. Mewan. In the case of some of these places, especially of places in the ancient dioceses of St.-Malo, Dol and Rennes, in the Brocéliande district, and on the St.-Malo coast, it may mean that they were evangelized by S. Mewan. In most cases it is probably due to his reputation as a healer. "To the Breton peasant the saints are men of extraordinary virtue, who were venerated during their life and possessed miraculous gifts, on account of their holiness, and have now become supernatural powers."⁴¹ In every European country during the Middle Ages the saints were thought of in this way, but in Brittany the belief survives with unabated force. Certain saints were regarded as specially efficacious for obtaining relief from particular diseases, which were often called after them—we have all heard of "S. Vitus's dance," and "S. Antony's fire." Certain kinds of skin disease were known as "S. Méen's evil." (In a book of French proverbs published in 1640 we find that "demoiselle de Saint Main"—a woman suffering from scurf.) We have seen how

⁴⁰ See No. 11 in this series (3rd edition), p. 35. I have recently printed Robert of Tauton's story. On 25 July 1858 a reliquary was given to St.-Méen and a festival held, on the occasion of which a large picture was printed showing S. Austol, S. Mewan and S. Judicaël in their stalls in the Abbey choir. It has become very rare. (Duine, *Saints de Brocéliande, I. Saint Méen*, Rennes, 1904, pp. 16, 17.)

⁴¹ Dr. Desmars. *Bull. de Assoc. Bret.*, 1923 (p. 136).

Albert Le Grand tells us about the pilgrims who in his time used to come to the well S. Mewan caused to spring up near his abbey. At one time, it is reckoned, between 4000 and 5000 used to come every year, from every part of France. Between the years 1653 and 1685

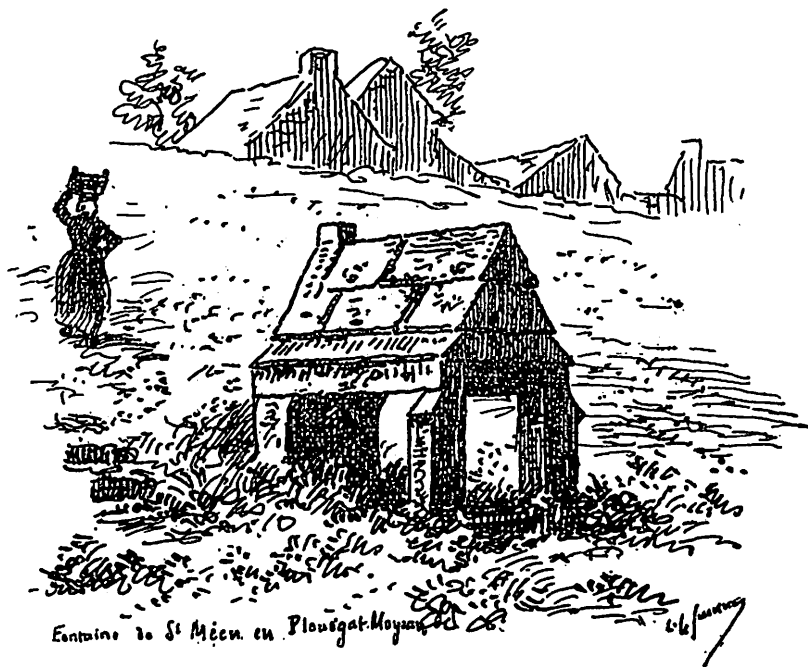


ANCIENT STATUE OF SAINT MEEN IN THE CHURCH OF SALINS (JURA) (from "Saint Méen," by M. l'abbé H. Chasle, 1910).

more than 40,000 passed through Rennes on their way to St.-Méén, mostly poor people. In 1627 a charitable citizen of Rennes, Guillaume Regnier, built a kind of shelter for them at the Tertre de Joué, east of the city, which became later the Hospice St.-Méén

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and is now a lunatic asylum.⁴² Similar hospitals existed at Vezin, near Rennes, and at Montfort between Rennes and St.-Méen (the latter founded apparently in the 15th century,—see Pouillé de Rennes, III. 298.) The pilgrims going to St.-Méen used to wear a *hand* cut out of cloth sewn on to their clothes or hats (*Méen* is pronounced exactly like the French word *main*=hand: this led to the saint's intercession being sought by those whose hands were diseased). Presently people began to resort for the same purpose



to other wells, churches and chapels possessing a statue of St. Méen. This explains the extraordinary way the cult of S. Mewan has spread, not only in Brittany, but to almost every part of France.

⁴² *Le Vieux Rennes*, by M. Banéat, gives (pp. 434 and 435) two views of the Hospice St.-Méen. The Church of the Cordeliers at Rennes (ib. 238) contained a chapel of St. Méen.

Already in the 16th century the habit of pilgrimages to shrines of S. Mewan had become very widespread. A Bishop of Avranches of that period, Robert Ceneau, speaks of "The famous St. Main, whose help is implored by everyone for the cure of 'furfures.'" He tells us that the following rule had to be observed by pilgrims seeking cure:—"they must live on alms while they are on the pilgrimage, however wealthy they may be, in order to conquer their pride. But on their return they must give to the poor the money they would have spent on their sustenance during their journey."

In the neighbourhood of Dol we find the cult of S. Mewan at Cancale, on the coast, where he is the patron of the parish church, a stone is said to bear the impress of his feet, and there is a holy well; at La Fresnais; at Plouer, Langrolay and Lanvallay on the banks of the Rance, above St.-Malo; and at Auceleuc and Bourseul. He is one of the patrons of the church of Plélan, he has, or once had, chapels dedicated to him at Bains, Gennes, Chartres, Bruc, Pléchâtel, Renac, Vezin, and Plaguet (near Vitré).⁴³ There are local traditions of his having preached at Bonnemain and Talensac.⁴⁴ In Higher Brittany the scabious is called "l'herbe Saint-Méen." In the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine is a place with the curious name "La Chapelle-aux-fils-Méen." There are statues of St. Méen in the church of Paimpont and in the chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Haut, near Moncontour.

In the diocese of Vannes there are fountains of St. Méen at Gerguy (in the Forest of Brocéliande) Grézieu, and Guenin, chapels dedicated to him at Beignon, La Chapelle-sous-Ploërmel, Le Saint, Plœmel (with old stained-glass window of the saint and fountain in which rickety children are dipped), Colpo, Guegon, Languidic, and

⁴³ See the *Pouillé de Rennes*, vols. IV., V., VI.

⁴⁴ On the edge of the Forest of Talensac, near the hamlet of La Chapelle-ès-Oresve, is a block of ferruginous schist (slate), shaped like a hone, called Le Grès Saint-Méen. The upper side shows a certain number of cylindrical perforations, and lines cutting crosswise, clearly the work of man. The local tradition is that St. Méen was a carpenter, and used to sharpen his tools on this rock—hence these marks. One day St. Méen, after having sharpened his axe on the rock, waved it round his head, and said

Oú ma hache tombera
Méén batira.

(Where my axe falls, Méén will build.) It fell at Talensac, two kilometres away, where the parish church is dedicated to St. Méen. (Sébillot, *Légende dorée de la Haute-Bretagne*, Nantes, 1897, pp. 55—57.)



*Statue near Moncontour.
("Les Saints Guérisseurs
de Moncontour")*



Statue at Paimpont.

formerly at Gerguy in Augan, near the well. He is patron at Quéven, Larré, Montertelot, Monteneuf, and Guilligomarch, where there are relics of the saint, the object of great popular devotion. There are a stream, a heath, and four hamlets called after him. At Berné he is honoured under the name of *san Mewan*.⁴⁵ A priest of the diocese writes "Fountains and altars dedicated to St. Méen are very numerous in the diocese of Vannes. In several places his cult has been substituted for that of other saints." There were relics of the saint at the Abbey of Rhuys in 1636.

In the diocese of Nantes S. Mewan is the patron of the former Priory of Saint-Méen-sur-Loire, at Le Cellier, near Ancenis; and at Trioubrie in the parish of Avesac (canton of St.-Nicholas-de-Redon) is a chapel dedicated to Saint Méen and Saint Giles.

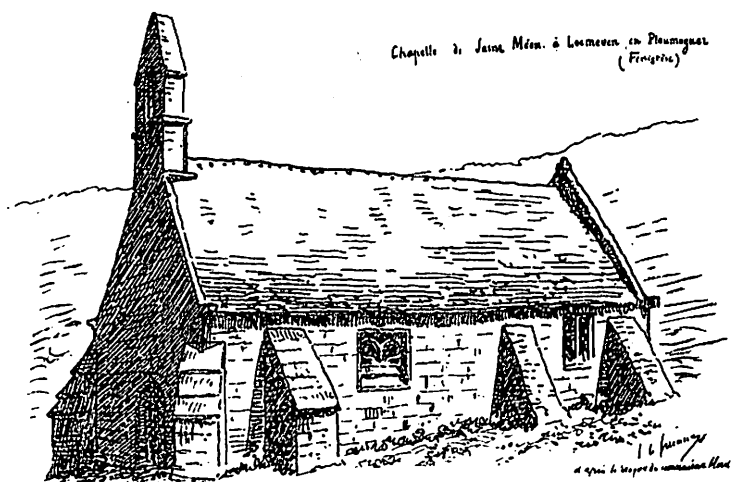
In the diocese of Cornouaille there is a relic of the saint at St.-Nic. There is a fine statue of the saint at Ploéven near Plomodiern, on the epistle side of the altar; he is vested in cope and mitre adorned with gems, and carries a book in his left hand and in his right a staff piercing the jaw of a monster at his feet. He has a statue at Plogonnec. He is also patron of Tréméven, near Quimperlé. In the diocese of Léon he is patron of St.-Méen near Lesneven, where there is a holy well; also of a chapel, with holy well, at Ploumoguier near St.-Renan. Both holy wells are reputed to cure skin-disease.

In the dioceses of St.-Brieuc and Tréguier he is patron of Lanneven (now in Bégard) and of Lanneven in Plouégat-Moysan; of Tréméven near Plouha; and of chapels at Lanrodec, Ploumagoar (destroyed), Plaine-Haute (destroyed), Planguenoual (two destroyed chapels) and Henanbihen (destroyed oratory). He has statues at Botlezan in Bégard, Certignon in Laurenan, Chapelle du Menech in Loudéac, Pléhédel, St.-Gilles du Vieux Marché, N.D.-du-haut in Tredaniel, and the Chapel of the Seven Saints at Yffiniac. There is a Bridge of St. Méen in Plenée Jugon, and a *Lomeven* in Glomel. In the church of Plouegat-Guerrand there is a little statuette of St. Mewan over the door in the South porch, dated 1536.

In Normandy St. Méen is venerated in a large number of parishes; at Hattenville (near Fauville in the Pays de Caux) where there is *confrérie de St. Mein*, and a popular *cantique* in honour of the saint in French, as well as a hymn in Latin, and a booklet published containing the rules of the Confraternity, Prayers, and a Life of the saint, together with advice to devout pilgrims—they are recommended, if they can, to pay for the maintenance of some poor person for nine days, or at any rate to give some alms: at

⁴⁵ Loth, *Noms des Saints Bretons*, p. 93.

Auberville-la-Renault, near Goderville-en-Caux, where St. Marcou shares with S. Mewan the patronage of the Confraternity, which uses the same manual for pilgrims as at Hattenville; at St.-Vandrilie and d'Ouille-l'Abbaye, and in the neighbourhood of Bolbec: the curé of St.-Valery-en-Caux wrote to M. Duine in 1903 saying "Many churches in the centre of the Pays de Caux, as far as the (modern) parish of St. Vincent de Paul in Havre inclusively, possess statues of St. Méen and pilgrimages in his honour." In the diocese of Coutances S. Mewan is honoured at Ste-Mère-Eglise, Ancteville, (where he has a statue and is invoked to cure children's skin-disease) Briqueville-sur-mer, and at Teurteville-Hague, near Cherbourg,



where he has a holy well and a pilgrimage. There is a holy well of Saint *Mein* at Guéhébert. In the church of La Chapelle-Biche, near Flers in the diocese of Séez, is a pilgrimage to obtain cures by the intercession of St. Méen.⁴⁶ At Carbec-Grestain, on the south side of the estuary of the Seine, east of Honfleur, there is a greatly-venerated statue of St. Méen in the parish church. The springs in the valley close by are regarded as efficacious for healing the worst diseases of the skin—one of them bears the name of St. Méen and is an object of pilgrimage. Now Carbec-Grestain adjoins the little group of

⁴⁶ See Seguin, *Saints Guérisseurs en Basse-Normandie*, 1929, pp. 102—105.

parishes dedicated to S. Samson which, down to the Revolution, formed an *enclave* of the diocese of Dol. (The diocese of Dol used to possess a number of enclaves or islands in other dioceses, just as many English counties and parishes possess islands in other counties and parishes.) This enclave probably marks the site of the abbey of Pental, built by S. Samson on land given to him by King Childebert. It is surely very significant that the cult of S. Mewan should be found close to the cult of his master S. Samson in Normandy. It looks as if the two saints had worked together at Grestain and perhaps elsewhere in Normandy. We must remember that there was no such country as *Normandy* in the 6th century. What is now Normandy was then the purely Gallo-Roman country of Neustria. The influence of the Celtic saints in Pre-Norman Neustria is a subject to which attention needs to be paid. It is significant that the principal parish church in Rouen, the capital of Normandy, is that of St. Maclou (St. Malo or Machutus) and that St. Maclou is the patron saint of the church of Auberville-la-Renault, mentioned above.

The cult of St. Méen spread all over France. We find pilgrimages to a statue or holy well of S. Mewan as far south as Nailloux (Hte Garonne)⁴⁷ at Jaleyrac (Cantal), and at Grandrieu (Lozère), where there is a basin cut in the rock, concerning which the following proverb is repeated—

Din lou bassin de sain Men
Aquel qu'a pas la rougno l'y pren.

(rougno=ringworm): also in the departments of l'Aveyron⁴⁸ and l'Hérault (at Saint-Pons). In Auvergne leprosy is called "le mal Saint-Méen."⁴⁹ His cult is found as far east as Salins (Jura) and Attigny, near Rheims. In 1774 the curé of Attigny, in response to a questionnaire addressed to the curés of the diocese by the Archbishop, wrote "There is a pilgrimage to Saint-Méen. Pilgrims come in large numbers every year to be healed of skin-disease, and are usually healed at the end of a novena." He refers to the rule for pilgrims to S. Mewan mentioned by Robert Ceneau, but an abuse,

⁴⁷ See note by Canon A. M. Thomas in the 1901 edition of Albert Le Grand's *Vies des Saints de la Bretagne*, p. 252. In Languedoc our saint has been confused with another saint,—St. Majan.

⁴⁸ See *Saint Méen—Vie, Pèlerinage*, par l'abbé Assie, Curé de Couffouleux (Aveyron) in the diocese of Rodez, 1926. The pilgrimage is on the 24th June, "depuis quelques années l'affluence a pris des proportions extraordinaires."

⁴⁹ *L'Auvergne*, par Louis Bréhier (Paris, 1923).

he says, had crept in. Pilgrims lived on alms, but forgot to make up for it by generosity to the poor on their return! A popular cantique in French is still sung at Attigny, beginning—

Célébrons la mémoire
Du vénérable Mein,
Que le Dieu de la gloire
Couronna de sa main.
Chantons les dons de grâce,
Et les rares vertus
Qui lui font trouver place
Dans le rang des Elus.

Not far from Attigny is Montmarin, where, close to the church, there is a well in which pilgrims wash their sores, afterwards hanging the towel they have used on a bush which stands near the well: this is done especially on June 12th, which, for some reason, is the Feast of St. Méen at Attigny. There is a pilgrimage to St. Méen at Hercy (Ardennes) with a festival on 12 June.

At Lasse, Châteaupanne, and elsewhere in Anjou are fountains and stones bearing the name of St. Méen, and a considerable popular cult of the saint.

He appears to have been honoured at Saint-Maur-des-Fossés near Paris and at Mortefontaine near Senlis (see Forgeais, *Collection de Plombs historiés trouvés dans la Seine*, 4e série, pp. 195—7).

St. Méen is the patron of the parish of Ruillé-le-Gravelais near Laval, where there is a fountain which the saint is said to have caused to spring up to save a long journey to a woman on a pilgrimage who had stopped there to dress her sores!

At Amiens relics of St. Méen were once to be seen, and there was a confraternity of St. Meen at Abbeville.⁵⁰

The name of Méen was borne by several of the seigneurs of Fougères in Higher Brittany, and the Norman conquest carried the cult of St. Méen (with that of other Breton saints, like Winwaloe) to East Anglia, where it became a family name. (The career of Henry Meen, classical scholar, a native of Norfolk and sizer at Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1761, known as "Little Meen," will be found in the Dictionary of National Biography.)

⁵⁰ Much of the information on pp. 26—31 was collected by the late M. l'abbé Duine, and published by him in *Saints de Brocéliande: I. Saint Méen* (Rennes, 1904), which contains a very rich Bibliography. cf. also *St. Gobrien* and *St. Armel* in the same series.

S. Mewan is invoked in three ancient litanies, *viz.* in that of the Psalter of Rheims (apparently composed by Breton clerks exiled in England in the time of Athelstan), where we find among the Confessors the names of *Judicaile*, *Mevinne* and finally *Toninane*,—all three, it is to be noted, are saints of St.-Meen (for *Toninanus* see below): in that of Salisbury (also of the 10th century and believed to be the work of Bretons in England): and in the Litany of Limoges (11th century).⁵¹ In all three of these litanies S. Judicaël is invoked as well as S. Mewan. S. Mewan is not invoked in the famous Litany of St.-Vougay. His name is found in the Martyrology of the Abbey of St.-Jacques-de-Montfort, and in the kalendar of the 11th century sacramentary of St.-Riquier (Bibl. Nat., ms. lat. 11589), where we find the entry *In Britania Mevinni presbiteri confessoris* on 21 June, and *In Britania Judicaëli conf.* on 17 Dec.: in the kalendar of the Abbey of St.-Melaine at Rennes, and in those of the dioceses of Dol, Rennes, Vannes, St.-Malo and St.-Brieuc, and in the kalendar of the Abbey of St.-Jacut.

In Great Britain there seems to have been hardly any cult of S. Mewan, though the Exeter Martyrology contains his name on 21st June. The entry in the older MS. of this martyrology (Exeter Chapter MSS. 3502, early 12th cent.) is *In Britannia Minori, sancti Mewinni abbatis*. In the later (14th cent.) MS, now in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (Parker MS. 93), the saint's name has been corrupted into *Menuymii*, and the words *et confessoris* added.

Neither of our two saints has any dedication in this country outside Cornwall (if we except the *Llanawstl* in Monmouthshire).

NOTE ON SAINT TOUINIANUS.

Among the many Celtic saints honoured at St.-Méén whose names are found in the kalendar of the Obituary of St. Méén (see p. 22) are a few peculiar to the Abbey. One of them was a *Touinianus, confessor*, whose feast fell on 2 August. He is the

⁵¹ See Duine, *Inventaire Liturgique*, pp. 43, 47 and 60 (cf. also pp. 158, 160, 190, 218). *Touinian* cannot be, as Duine suggested, a mistake for *Tenenan*, for the latter's festival is on 16th July. 32]



CROSS AND HOLY WELL AT SAINT UNIAC.

eponym of the parish of *Saint Uniac*, where the Abbey had a Priory.⁵² The Abbey Church possessed some of his relics. In the church of Saint-Uniac is a painted window, dated 1547, containing figures of S. Main, S. Thugnac (he wears a red chasuble lined in blue, with a blue cross on it, and a red and gold mitre, and apparently holds parchments in his hands), S. Samson and the B.V.M. 600m. S.E. of the bourg (churchtown) of Saint-Uniac is the saint's holy well, by which stands a lofty cross, carved but much mutilated. The parish, it is to be noted, was an enclave (isolated portion) of the diocese of Dol, so that its patron saint was probably a companion of S. Sampson. The initial T of the saint's name has been lost by being absorbed by the final t of the word "Saint" (as has frequently happened in such cases), and the final *ac* has been added in the vernacular, as at Saint-Suliac, where the name in Latin is *Sulinus* or *Sulianus*. The final *an* of the Latin form Touinian may also be an addition (the *Vita Machuti* of Bili calls St.-Pol-de-Leon "oppidum Sancti Paulinnani"). In Wales there is a *Towyn* near Cardigan. A Saint *Toui* appears in the Cartulary of Redon in 854 (*monasteriolum quod vocatur Sent Thoui*,—an earlier but undated charter has *Sint Toui*). A *Saint Hwi* is mentioned in the Book of Llandaff.

Is it possible that this saint, clearly connected both with S. Mewan and S. Sampson, is the eponym of Towyn Holy Well and Chapel in St. Austell parish (see pp. 37, 43)?

NOTE ON THE FOREST OF BROCELIANDE.

Thousands of English tourists visit Brittany every year, but usually they only know the coast. Yet the interior of the peninsula is well worth a visit. Towards the west it consists of the high moorlands known as the Black Mountains and the Montagnes d'Arree, which resemble Dartmoor and the Cornish moors. The east was formerly covered with a vast forest, the forest of Broceliande, which plays a very important part in the Arthurian romances. It was long looked upon as an enchanted forest, the abode of fairies and supernatural beings. There the wizard Merlin

⁵² See Baneat, *op. cit.*, IV. 169, 170, and the Pouille de Rennes, II. 161—3.

lay a prisoner, under the spell of the fairy Vivien.³³ In the "Quest of the Holy Graal" Sir Galahad finds in the Forest of Broceliande the enchanted well of Barenton, the water of which was cold as ice and the sand red as blood and hot as fire,—three times a day the water became green as an emerald and bitter as the sea. Continuing his journey through the forest, Sir Galahad comes to a great and fair monastery built on a lake called "Lou'h Rouan," (=The Queen's Lake), and finally arrives at a chapel where he finds the Book of the Graal. The chronicler Wace visited the well of Barenton in the 12th century, and tells us of the marvels related of it. If the water of the well was sprinkled on the great stone close by, men said, strange voices were heard through the forest, the trees seemed to blaze as if all the forest were on fire, terrific battles seemed to be raging in its recesses, and thunders shook the earth, to be suddenly succeeded by a dead silence. One of the Arthurian romances tells us how Kynon, one of the knights of the Round Table, found by the spring, under a great tree, a silver cup, fastened by a chain of the same metal to a marble rock. He filled it at the fountain and poured the water on the rock. Immediately the thunder roared, and a storm of hail, so fierce that the knight could scarce endure it, burst upon him. When it had

³³ The reader will remember Tennyson's adaptation of the story in the "Idylls of the King,"—"Merlin and Vivien,"—

"Touching Breton sands, they disembarked.
And then she followed Merlin all the way,
Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.
For Merlin once had told her of a charm,
The which if any wrought on anyone
With woven paces and with waving arms,
The man so wrought on ever seemed to lie
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,
From which was no escape for ever more ;
And none could find that man for ever more,
.....and he lay as dead
And lost to life and use and name and fame.
And Vivien ever sought to work the charm
Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,
As fancying that her glory would be great
According to his greatness whom she quench'd.

Till at last Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept.
Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands,
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
And lost to life and use and name and fame."



St. AUSTELL IN 1831.
(from "Cornwall Illustrated." Drawn by Thomas Allom).

ceased, the sun shone once more, and the branches of the tree, stripped of its leaves by the storm, were covered with birds singing with unearthly sweetness such as Kynon had never heard before. Then appeared a knight in black armour, who fought with Kynon and vanquished him. Kynon returned to the court of King Arthur and told his adventures. Another knight, Owen, who was listening to Kynon, resolved to try his fortune. He set out, and finally overthrew the black knight, married the lady of the castle, and became the guardian of the enchanted spring. The forest of Paimpont is the largest remaining fragment of this once vast forest ; many place-names in the neighbourhood, such as "The Valley of the fairies," "The Valley without return," "Folle-Pensée," "The field of tournaments," "The garden of love," etc. recall its ancient legendary fame.

The missionaries who followed the British emigrants to Armorica evangelized the interior of the country as well as the coast. They penetrated into this mysterious forest of Broceliande, and planted settlements there, which became centres of culture and true Religion. The heathen forest was christianised, and its legends and wild romances took a Christian colouring. Mewan was the chief Christian evangelist of the Broceliande country. He founded on the land given him at Gaël by Caduon an abbey which became the most important religious house in the interior of Brittany, and a centre of missionary work. The Old Testament story (2 Kings vi: 1-4) which I have prefixed to my little book is a picture of what was going on in the Forest of Broceliande and throughout Brittany during the 5th and 6th centuries. The "sons of the prophets" building themselves a new home prefigured the Celtic monks making ever new settlements in the wildernesses of Britain and France, where they were, like the prophets of Israel, "men of God" who lived in close communion with the Lord and were His messengers to His people ; Elisha, the leader of the bands of prophets, the inspiration and hope of the whole people, "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," has his anti-types in Mewan and the other saintly Breton abbots and bishops.

III.

ST. AUSTELL.

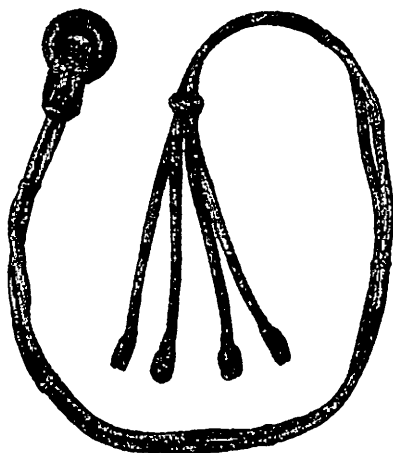
The stranger who sees for the first time the magnificent parish church of St. Austell and the narrow tortuous streets which surround it might suppose that the town is an old one. In this he would be wrong, for until about 250 years ago St. Austell was a

purely country parish. In the later Middle Ages a village had gathered round the church, but it remained an inconsiderable place until the end of the 17th century, when the growth of mining brought (as in other Cornish towns, like Redruth) a sudden increase of population. The church is spacious and handsome because the old parish was one of the largest in Cornwall, extending from the high tableland behind Hensbarrow to the sandy bay of Pentewan. St. Austell was moreover the mother church of St. Blazey, which did not become independent till 1845. The town is mainly built on the large glebe or "sanctuary" lying round the church, which is referred to in the first document that mentions St. Austell church, and which was no doubt given to Saint Austolus by some Cornish king or lord early in the 6th century. It is fitting that the name of this prosperous and wealthy industrial centre should be a perpetual reminder that it owes its origin ultimately not to clayworkers but to monks.

Though the church of St. Austell is not mentioned earlier than the 12th century, there must have been, long before that, several oratories in this large district, some of them going back to the "Age of the saints," when Cornwall became Christian. We will deal with the chapels in St. Austell parish of whose existence in the Middle Ages we have certain knowledge when we have briefly described the parish church. Of the stone crosses which are the principal visible memorials remaining of the ancient Celtic Church of Cornwall St. Austell possesses only one—the rude cross in the churchyard,¹ which originally stood on the Manor of Treverbyn near Luxulyan boundary, and a Gothic Latin cross may be seen in the garden of Moor Cottage; but field-names show that there were once at least eleven more. There are fields called "Cross Park" at Menagwins (Tithe-map, No. 1264). Boscundle (2362), Benallack's Tenement (2712), Tregonissey (2968), Trenarren (1433-4, 1437), Penrice (1317, 1323), Trevissick (1378) and Castle Gotha (1566); a "Cross Field" at Grey Estate (2748-9), a "Cross Close" at Polglaize (1202) and "The Grouses" (1184a) at Pentowan. But St. Austell can boast of relics of the primitive Christianity of our county which are altogether unique. On 8 Nov. 1774 some tin streamers found on Trehiddleestate, in the valley below the church,² at a depth of 17 feet below the surface, a silver chalice—said to be the oldest in England, a silver cord used for self discipline by some devout priest, and about 114 coins, including silver pennies minted in the

¹ See Langdon's *Cornish Crosses*, p. 253.

² It is probable that the tide flowed up this valley for a considerable distance in early times.



CHALICE AND DISCIPLINE (9th century) FOUND AT TREWHIDDLE IN St. AUSTELL IN 1774, (by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum).

reigns of five different Kings of Mercia. The chalice and discipline are now in the British Museum. They must have been buried at Trewhiddle about 875, in King Alfred's reign, but are doubtless older than that. They are here illustrated.

Like most other Cornish parishes, St. Austell is not mentioned in Domesday Book, but the manors whose lands afterwards became the territory of the parish of St. Austell are. Domesday tells us that "the King has 1 manor which is called DEWINTON," (Tewington), and the description shows that it was a large and important one. In the centre of this manor was a smaller one called TRENANT, already in 1085 divided into two parts (afterwards known as Trenance Austell and Trenance Prior) the former held by Hamelin and containing 1 hide, the latter, of a $\frac{1}{2}$ hide, held by Brient.³

Domesday is like a flash of light, momentary and partial, into the darkness which, ever since the 7th century, had covered the face of Cornwall and hides from us almost the whole of her earlier history. But in the 12th century we see a great revival of letters and learning begin all over Europe, a true "Renaissance." The "Dark Ages" are past, Universities are founded, documents and records of all kinds begin to abound, history books and Lives of Saints are written. It is in this century that the majority of the parishes of Cornwall, among them St. Austell, emerge into the light of history.

We observe in the documents I am going to summarize that the Church and Parish, from the very first mention of them which we possess, bear the name of a saint.

About 1150 Robert fitz William, Lord of Cardinham, the head of a family which, ever since the Norman Conquest, had owned vast estates in Cornwall and had showed themselves very generous to the Church,⁴ gave the Church of Saint Austolus, with its glebe or "sanctuary," to the Benedictine Priory of St. Andrew at Tywardreath, which his grandfather had founded.⁵ The gift is described in two charters still extant. In the first, dated 1159, Robert says, "with the assent of the whole Hundred of Teuintune, I, and my dearest wife Agnes, and our son Robert, have freed the

³ The manor of *Tremaruustel* was in Kea (see No. 20 in this series, p. 32). There is a place called Austell in Altarnon, but it may be derived from *Austine's Well*.

⁴ See my recently published *History of Cardynham*.

⁵ Apparently Robert's grandfather, Richard *dapifer* or Fitz Tuold, had already given the manor of *Trenand* to the Priory, which has ever since, in consequence, been called "Trenance Prior."

sanctuary of Saint Austol from all service, custom and exaction, including a certain custom which at that time (whether rightly or wrongly) lay upon the aforesaid sanctuary [unfortunately this custom is not described, nor is "that time" defined], and we freely grant the sanctuary, thus freed, in perpetual alms, to Almighty God and to Blessed Andrew the apostle and to Saint Austolus." The charter was given at *Tiwardrait*, and four days later was confirmed with the assent of the whole Hundred, at *Landrait* (St. Blazey). One of the witnesses is called Osbert *de Sancto Austolo*. In another charter Robert says "I have myself given, and confirmed, to the Priory of Tywardreath, the Church of Saint Austolus, with all its appendages and whatever sanctuary belongs to it, viz. three [Cornish] acres of land, free from all secular service."⁶ (This gift of the *Ecclesia de Austel* or *Austol* was notified by Robert to the Bishop of Exeter, and afterwards confirmed by King Henry III. in 1235.)

At first the monks of Tywardreath must have provided for the services in St. Austell church, and throughout the parish, by sending one or more of their number (as suited their convenience. But in the 13th century it began to be widely recognised that this was not a satisfactory arrangement, and we find the Bishops of Exeter everywhere compelling monasteries to appoint a "perpetual *Vicar*" or representative. This Vicar was indeed presented for institution by the monks but, once appointed, he could not be removed. Moreover his share of the parish revenue, viz. the "Vicarial tithe," was fixed by written agreement under the Bishop's seal. We find that this had been done at St. Austell by 1259, and the Priory continued to be Rectors of the parish and patrons of the Vicarage until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1535, when the patronage and the Great Tithe were seized by the Crown.

The fabric of the parish church has witnessed some of these transactions. Its earlier portions date from the late Norman period, when the church seems to have been built in the form of a nave and

⁶ See Oliver's *Monasticon Exoniense*, pp. 38 and 39, Charters Nos. III, VII and XI.

⁷ In 1410 we find the English form *Seynt Austell*. In a deed of 1250 we find a reference to *Lanalwstel* (= "Monastery of Alwstel,") but we have no clue as to where it was. I do not think it was St. Austell. We have seen that there was a place called *Tremaruustel* in Kea (see p. 37, Note 3). Near St. Jean-Brevelay in Brittany (Morb.) is a place called Saint-Allouestre (Saint *Argoestle*, 1280). M. Loth says that *Argoestle* in Old Celtic would be *Arewestlo*. The word *arwestl* = "pledge." *Arystl* appears as a saint in Welsh genealogies, and *Arquistl* was the name of the 9th Bishop of Llandaff (Loth, *Noms*, p. 11). 38]

chancel with two narrow lean-to aisles. This structure, and the font, would date from about 1150, the time when the church was handed over to the Priory. In the first part of the 13th century the arches of the arcades were raised, and in 1259 we find Bishop Bronescombe coming to consecrate the church. (The fact that the church was consecrated in that year does not imply that it had been entirely rebuilt. The Council of St. Paul's a few years previously had ordered Bishops to set about hallowing churches which the negligence of their predecessors had allowed to remain unconsecrated.) The 14th century saw the widening and enriching of the south chancel to accommodate the chantry priest of S. Michael's chapel. But the best was to come. In the 15th and early 16th centuries there was a wave of church-building all over Cornwall, and St. Austell owes most of its glory to this epoch. It was then that the superb tower, with all its wealth of statuary, which has fortunately escaped the vandalism of the Reformation, was built.⁸ The buildings over the two holy wells of Menacuddle and Towan were also erected about 1500.

The Chantry just mentioned was the most interesting religious institution in the parish. It seems to have been formed by the amalgamation of two separate foundations, *viz.* the ancient Chapel of Menacuddle near the Holy Well there (see p. 41) and a later Chantry of S. Michael in a chapel close to the parish church, which is usually called "The Free Chapel of S. Michael in the cemetery of St. Austell," but in 1349 is described as "The perpetual Chantry of the Chapel of S. Michael in the south aisle (*in ala dextera*) of the Church of S. Austolus." It was richly endowed in the reign of Edward I. by the generosity of Philip de Sancto Austolo, Archdeacon of Winchester, who in 1291 granted the Church of St. Clether in North Cornwall to the Chapel of S. Michael in the cemetery. Not content with this, in 1301 he obtained Royal Licence to convey a house and three furlongs of land in *Menkudul* for the support of three chaplains to celebrate daily for his soul in the chapel of S. Michael in the town of St. Austolus. This estate, measuring 71 acres, is Tithe Free, and was probably the endowment of the ancient Chapel of Menacuddle, with which we shall deal later on. It remained the property of the Chantry of S. Michael till the suppression of the latter under the Chantry Act of 1545, when it was seized by the Crown. It is still in lay hands. Owing to the union of the Menacuddle lands with its other endowments, the Chantry took the

⁸ It resembles the tower of Lanlivery church near Tywardreath.

rather confusing name of "The Free Chapel of Menacuddle." In the Chantry Certificate of 1545 it is even called "The Paryshe Church of Benekudell"!

It seems that Philip also thought of appropriating to the Chantry the Rectory of Grade near the Lizard, which he acquired in 1301, but circumstances prevented his doing so. This St. Austell man evidently had a great affection for the church of his native town.

In the licence of 1301 "three chaplains" are mentioned, but as a matter of fact the Chantry was served by a single *custos* or warden, presented by the Prior and convent of Tywardreath and instituted by the Bishop. A list of these wardens, 28 in number, compiled from the Episcopal Registers by the late Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph, is printed in Canon Hammond's History of St. Austell (pp. 218—222). Mr. Henderson has however discovered in the Assize Roll (p. 273) the name of another *custos*, called Mr. Philip de Sancto Austolo, a namesake of the founder.⁹ He succeeded Sir John de Trewythosa. The wardens acted as deacons at High Mass in the parish church. In 1545 the income of the Chantry was £6, and would at the present time realise about £200 yearly. It is a pity that the Crown did not allow it to remain the property of the parish as a permanent Curate's stipend.

The Chapel of S. Michael seems to have been originally a separate building in the churchyard. Chapels in churchyards are exceedingly common in Brittany, and were found in Cornwall at St. Kew, Probus, Bodmin, Crantock and elsewhere. At St. Kew the chapel was eventually absorbed into the church, and this seems to have been the case at St. Austell.¹⁰

⁹ A Philip de Sancto Austolo was ordained priest in 1318 (Stapeldon's Register, 518). Mr. Rundle ("Lanje") has discovered two more names of Wardens: c. 1321, John Nicholas de Truru.

29th Oct., 1374, Robert de Faryngton presented to the Chantry of Menacudel in the Chapel of S. Michael situate in the churchyard of St. Austell, etc. (Patent Roll, Westminster).

¹⁰ A difficulty is caused by the fact that the words in the Episcopal Registers recording the institution of wardens in 1364, 1371 and 1376, "*Cantaria capelle [in libera capella, 1376]*" *Sci. Michaelis infra cimiterium [in cimiterio, 1371, 1376]* are *after* the entry in 1349 which says it was "in the south aisle." It may be the case of a stereotyped formula being used which was no longer accurate.

ANCIENT CHAPELS.

MENACUDDLE.

In addition to the parish church and its chapel of S. Michael, the parish of St. Austell in the Middle Ages contained numerous other chapels.

The most important was that at Menacuddle. It stood in a most romantic situation, a mile NNW. of the church, in a secluded and beautifully wooded narrow gorge between high hills, by the side of a stream rushing down from Black Moor in a succession of cascades which reminds one of the beautiful lines of Wordsworth in his poem "In Catholic Switzerland" about

"the chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways."

Adjoining it was a Holy Well, which still exists. The little building over it, one of the most beautiful in Cornwall, has often been described and figured,¹¹ and it is scarcely necessary to do so here. It is of late 15th century date, and has two arched entrances opposite one another, and a small window in the west wall. The east wall is built against the natural rock, and the well springs up beneath it. The material is wholly granite. In 1922 Sir Charles Graves Sawle, the owner of Menacuddle estate, having thoroughly restored the building, handed it over, with the adjacent gardens, to the Churchwardens of St. Austell as a memorial to his only son, who fell in the Great War.

Close to the chapel and well was the estate which, as we have seen, Philip of St. Austell gave to the Chantry Chapel of S. Michael.

Menacuddle is spelt *Meneguidel* in 1250, and *Menecudel*¹² in 1284, 1365 and 1369, and Mr. Henderson thought that the word might mean "The Minihi [= "sanctuary," or, more properly, "Church land"] of Guidel." There is an important parish of this name in Brittany, on the south coast, near Lorient. There is also a *Guédél* in Belle-Ile. The late M. Loth¹³ says that it is a personal name, the

¹¹ See M. and L. Quiller-Couch, *Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall*, 1894, pp. 156-9, Blight's *Ancient Crosses, etc., of East Cornwall*, p. 94.

¹² The Cornish *u* was pronounced like the German modified *ü*; thus Kuggar is properly pronounced "Kiggar" and *Botuder* is now spelt *Boteeda*. The form *Menkudul* is found in 1301, and a deed of 1314 refers to *Bogeuf juxta Menethcudul*, which suggests a different explanation (*meneth*=mountain).

¹³ *Noms des Saints Bretons*, p. 55.

Old Breton form being *Guitaul*, from the Latin *Vitalo*, and thought that the parish of Guidel was once called "Plou-Guidel." It is worth remarking that the ancient rural deanery of Guidel contains three of the places in the diocese of Vannes already referred to in which there is a cult of S. Meven—Berné, Guilligomarch and Quéven,¹⁴ while Languidic, Le Saint and Guenin are in the neighbourhood (see pp. 26, 28). The estate of Menacuddle, which was for so many centuries Church land, may well have been the Minihiy of Guidel¹⁵ in the Age of the Saints, and "it seems probable," Mr. Henderson concluded, "that when Archdeacon Philip of St. Austell gave Menkudul to the Chantry of S. Michael, he was suppressing a chapel of Celtic foundation for the benefit of a modern one." In the 13th century the lands of Menacuddle seem to have belonged to the Prior of Tywardreath, whose vill of *Menequidel* is named in an agreement with the Treverbyn family, dealing with "the vills of Saint Austol and Menequidel" (see Oliver, *op. cit.*, pp. 42—3, Charter No XIX).¹⁶

¹⁴ My authority for the cult of St. Meven at Quéven is a letter from M. l'abbé Le Bras, Rector of Riantec, to M. Duine in 1903—"Saint Méen est le second patron de Quéven, et, avant la Révolution, il avait une chapelle dans une trêve de cette paroisse." M. Le Mené (*Histoire des paroisses du diocèse de Vannes*, II. pp. 250—2) does not mention St. Méen, but speaks of some nameless chapels in Quéven.

¹⁵ Mr. Henderson compares *Menequidel* with the name of the place where the chalice and discipline already referred to (p. 36) were found—Trewiddle (*Trewydel juxta Tregorrek* in 1313).

¹⁶ Some attempts were made to rob the Chantry of this land in the 14th century. The Assize Rolls (p. 259) show that in 1365 Laurence Boscojelek, custos of the Chapel of S. Michael in the cemetery of St. Austell, recovered seizin of a messuage and 1 acre Cornish, with 300 of heath, in Menecudel juxta villam de Sancto Austolo, against John Redel junior, John his son and Margery his daughter, Elena daughter of Hugh Alot and others. His damages were assessed at 40d. In 1369 (Assize Rolls, 263) the aforesaid Elena made a counter claim to the property. She declared that long before there had been any custos of the Chapel interested in it, to wit in the time of Edward I., one Reginald de Menecudel was seized of the premises, and gave them to Robert de Tregennen his son and to Alice his wife in tail, and afterwards Robert gave them by script to one Mr. Philip de Sco. Austolo, then custos of the Chapel, for life, with power to make an assignment to whomsoever he pleased for 50 years after his death. This plausible story failed to convince the Court. King Edward VI. granted the property to Sir Thomas Pomeroy, from whom it descended by various sales to the Graves-Sawle family.

TOWAN.

Below the homestead of Towan, the capital of the Paramount Manor of Tewington, in an enclosed marsh, stands a very interesting building known as Chapel Well. It is rectangular, with an arched doorway and gabled roof, and is wholly constructed of carefully cut blocks of Pentewan stone. Within is the well, and above it a carved bracket for an image. There is also a niche for a pitcher in the left-hand wall. Dimensions: Front, 6 ft. wide, 8 ft. 8 in. high; Interior, 3 ft. 1 in. wide, 4 ft. 8½ in. deep. In the near vicinity stood a chapel, of which several cut stones may be seen in the hedges. In the Assession Roll of the Manor of Tewington, 1521, a parcel of land in Towan is called "Chappel-lond" [*i.e.* Chapel Land]. The Chapel and Well, says Mr. Henderson, probably had their origin in the Celtic period, and were kept in repair and re-erected by the Tenants of the Royal Manor of Tewington for their convenience.¹⁷ In the Tithe Apportionment of 1839 a field (No. 1020) is called *Chapel Park*, and another (1021) *Chapel Close*. The Holy Well was restored by the St. Austell Old Cornwall Society in 1937.

The interesting name of *Alterwen* is applied to several fields on Trenarren (Nos. 1411—1413, 1416) and on Trevissick (No. 1401). Is this a parallel to Altar-non=The Altar of Nonna?¹⁸

TREVERBYN.

Hals refers to "a free chapel and burying place lately (1690) here extant." Tradition points out the site in the "Church Field" adjoining the present farmhouse of Treverbyn Major. No licence seems to be recorded, and as early as 1300 the Lords of the Manor became non-resident. It is, however, possible that Treverbyn is included in one of the general licences issued to the Courtenay family; though the public nature of the chapel is evidenced by its having become "parish land" in later years. In 1677 the parish of St. Austell held "a plot called Treverbin Chapel," and in 1840 this consisted of "an old Pair of walls and a plot of land ⅛ of an acre" (see account in the Report of the Charity Commissioners, 1840, p. 447).

The name *Erbyn* is a saint's name, and may be the same as *Ervan* (see No. 35 in this series, pp. 18—20).

¹⁷ See pp. 32, 33.

¹⁸ Cf. p. 14.

CHAPEL-MAIN.

In the old parish accounts, among the Church property we find Chapel-Main (*Chappell Meane* 1659, Chapel Mean 1677, *Chapel Main* 1839). In 1840 it was let at a rent of £2/10/0, devoted to the repair of the church. (See Charity Commissioners' Report, 447, and Hammond's *A Cornish Parish*, p. 101. Chapel-Main is a small field, near Menacuddle Well, just across the river.

In a list of tinworks in the parishes of St. Austell, St. Mewan and St. Ewe belonging to Peter Edgecombe, Esqre, in 1593, appears the name of *St. Margerett's Chappell* (also of *St. Margaret's Moor* and *St. Margaret's Slip*); apparently in the vicinity of Mulfra, though possibly in the parish of St. Ewe.

MOLINGEY.

On 22 Sept., 1400 John Chayndyt and Ebota his wife had licence for the *Chapel of the Blessed Mary* in their mansion of *Myllynse* in St. Austell (Stafford's Register, 273). The house soon after became the seat of the important family of Petit or Le Petit. On 6 May 1401 John Petyt and Margaret his wife had licence for chapels of St. Mary the Virgin at their mansions of Predennek, Rostek and *Myllynse*. In 1420 Michael Petyt, Esqre., and Julian his wife had licence for the chapel of *Menynsy* in St. Austell, and in 1433 this was renewed in favour of Margaret Pedet, John Pedet of Predannek and Joan his wife and their children, at *Melynsy* (Stafford, 278, Lacy 424 and 602).

The Tithe Apportionment of 1839 shows that there was a field (No. 2546) at Boscoppa called *Chapel Park*, and another at Tregonissey (No. 2958) called *Chapel Field*.

ST. MEWAN.

St. Mewan is the Manorial Church of Trewoon, the TREGOIN of Domesday—it was then held by Hamelin. The manor having become divided into moieties between the co-heirs of Valle-Torta c. 1350, the patronage is also enjoyed *alternis vicibus* by the several Lords of Trewoon to this day. The Domesday manor of TRELWI (Treloweth) was also in the parish.

The name is usually spelt *Sanctus Mewanus* in the Episcopal Registers, though *Mewen*, *Muan*, etc. are also found. In 1500 James Rice, citizen and goldsmith of London, left 20s. to the High Altar of *Meuen* in Cornwall, to be prayed for. The name *Mewan* probably occurs in *Trevowan* and other Cornish place-names.

The spring in one of the Glebe fields is said to be a Holy Well, but there are no visible remains of any ancient building, though Mr. Henderson was informed locally that carved stones were said to lie buried under the debris round the spring.

The bounds of Burngullow Common are described in 1671 as beginning "By Burngullof lane end at a place or *stone* there called *White Crosse*, that divideth the lands of Mr. Tanner and Burngullof, and from there direct North to a rock called Carrackangoge about half a myle from White Crosse." A map of the Manor in 1690 at Lanhydrock Office, Bodmin, shows all these places. White Cross stood on the present high road from St. Austell to Nanpean, where the road coming up from Burngullow meets it, and close to the Board School of Lanjeth.

John Wac, the pluralist clerk, occurs as Rector in 1225, but the first recorded institution is not until 1318.

St. Mewan Feast used to be observed in the late autumn, but has unfortunately been allowed to drop into disuse. The Rev. J. T. S. Stopford, Rector of S. Mewan, wrote to M. Duine in 1903: "The following details have been supplied me by the old sexton of the parish, who knows all the ancient traditions of the neighbourhood. Formerly the Feast at St. Mewan was held on the 5th Sunday before Christmas, and the Revel on the following Monday. Disorders took place at the Revel, which has been neglected for some time. Efforts were made to replace it by festivities of a less rowdy character, but without success. Nothing but the memory of the Revel now remains."

It is a pity that these efforts to preserve this ancient institution were so half-hearted. Could not some lovers of Old Cornwall try to revive the Revel? The clergy have done this successfully in some parishes. Where there's a will there's a way.

MEVAGISSEY.

Mevagissey (*Lann vorech* 1230, *Lamoreke* 1330) has two patron saints,—S. Meva and S. Issey. It has been thought that Saint *Meva* may be the same as S. Mevan or Mewan, but this is doubtful.

My best thanks are due to Miss Violet Adamson, Breageside, Porthleven, and to the late M. Le Guennec, Librarian of the Public Library, Quimper, for the charming sketches they contributed to this little book, and to M. Le Vicomte Henri Frotier de la Messelière for very kindly sending me his sketch of the statue of St. Méen, with the effigy and arms of Oliver Guiho, abbot of Paimpont 1407-1452, in the old abbey church of Paimpont, to the Trustees of the British Museum for their courtesy in allowing me to reproduce their pictures of the Trehiddle chalice and scourge, and to my old friend M. l'abbé Le Texier, Curé-doyen of Merdrignac, to whom I am indebted for the information about Le Loscouët, which I visited while staying in his hospitable presbytère in 1935, under the guidance of his Vicaire, M. l'abbé Jallu.—G.H.D.



